

STATE OF NEW YORK

8156

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

October 13, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. BRONSON -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing a workplace readiness week for secondary school students

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "youth
2 workplace readiness act".

3 § 2. Legislative findings and intent. It is the intent of the Legisla-
4 ture that New York pupils enter the workforce with a strong understand-
5 ing of their rights as workers, as well as their explicit rights as
6 employed minors. It is further the intent of the Legislature to equip
7 pupils with this knowledge to protect them from retaliation and discrim-
8 ination, to ensure that these young workers receive all wages and bene-
9 fits to which they are entitled, to empower them to refuse unsafe work
10 when necessary, and to prepare them to assert their labor rights whenever
11 these rights are threatened.

12 The Legislature hereby finds and declares that young New Yorkers must
13 enter the workforce having received a thorough education on their right
14 to join or organize a union at their workplace. It is further the intent
15 of the Legislature that secondary schools present state-approved appren-
16 ticeship programs as a path towards a living wage career for all pupils.

17 § 3. The education law is amended by adding a new section 818 to read
18 as follows:

19 § 818. Workplace readiness week. 1. The week of each year that
20 includes May first shall be known as "workplace readiness week". All
21 secondary schools shall annually observe that week by providing informa-
22 tion to students on their rights as workers. The topics covered shall
23 include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

24 (a) local, state, and federal laws regarding each of the following
25 issues:

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (i) child labor;
2 (ii) wage and hour protections;
3 (iii) worker safety;
4 (iv) workers' compensation;
5 (v) paid sick leave;
6 (vi) prohibitions against retaliation; and
7 (vii) the right to organize a union in the workplace;

8 (b) the labor movement's role in winning the protections and benefits
9 described in paragraph (a) of this subdivision;

10 (c) an introduction to state-approved apprenticeship programs in New
11 York, how to access them, and how they can provide an alternative career
12 path for those who do not attend university or college; and

13 (d) an introduction to financial literacy which shall include, but not
14 be limited to, banking basics, budgeting, and filing taxes.

15 2. For students in grades eleven and twelve, the observances required
16 by subdivision one of this section shall be integrated into the regular
17 school program, consistent with the history/social science curriculum,
18 but may also include special events after regular school hours. This
19 integration is encouraged, but not required, to occur during workplace
20 readiness week.

21 3. Any minor seeking working papers in order to be employed in the
22 state shall be issued, before or at the time of receiving such working
23 papers, a document clearly explaining basic labor rights extended to
24 workers. Topics covered in this document shall include, but not be
25 limited to, those topics identified in paragraph (a) of subdivision one
26 of this section. Such document shall be produced, and made available, in
27 any language spoken by five percent or more of the pupils enrolled in
28 any one school or, if requested, in the primary language of any student
29 and shall express these labor rights in plain, natural terminology easi-
30 ly understood by the student. The document shall be in a physical form
31 but may also be provided electronically. The New York state school of
32 industrial and labor relations at Cornell university is encouraged to
33 produce, with input from bona fide labor organizations, a draft template
34 for the document to be provided to minors seeking working papers pursu-
35 ant to this subdivision, including the translations specified.

36 4. The commissioner shall annually send a written notice, detailing
37 the requirements of workplace readiness week and how teachers may access
38 related instructional materials and other resources, to every secondary
39 school in the state, at least one month before workplace readiness week.

40 § 4. This act shall take effect immediately.